

We Claim:

1. (Amended) A soft count tracking system for a currency operated host gaming machine comprising an identification adapter that includes an integral active electronic component, said component adapted to store a unique serial number, means for placing said identification adapter in data communication with the host machine, a currency note validator with a microcontroller, means for placing said currency note validator in data communication with said identification adapter for interrogating the identification adapter for identification number, a storage mechanism that includes integral nonvolatile storage memory means, and means for placing said storage mechanism in data communication with said currency note validator thereby to receive and hold information from said identification adapter, and a soft count supervisor adapted to be placed in detachable data communication with said memory means to interrogate and extract data from the same, said soft count supervisor comprising a computer, including software means to provide spread sheet data manipulation of the data extracted from said memory means.

2. (Amended) The soft count tracking system according to claim 1, said means for placing said [said] identification adapter in data communication with the host machine including a wiring harness, said active electronic component being disposed in said harness.

3. The soft count tracking system according to claim 2, said active electronic component communicating by means of a one-wire protocol.

4. The soft count tracking system according to claim 3, said wiring harness including means for detachably coupling the same to the host machine.

5. The soft count tracking system according to claim 4, said storage mechanism adapted to stack and securely transport notes and coupons.

6. The soft count tracking system according to claim 3, each of said means for placing said identification adapter, currency note validator and storage mechanism in data communication comprising a harness segment.

7. The soft count tracking system according to claim 6, each of said segments including mating disconnect elements by which a respective segment can be decoupled.

Add Claims 8-23 as follows:

Sub. a1>

8. A soft count tracking system comprising:
an identification adapter having a unique serial number;
a currency note validator having a microcontroller;
a storage mechanism having an integral storage memory; and
a soft count supervisor comprising a computer and a program for providing a spread sheet output.

9. The system according to claim 8, wherein the identification adapter is in communication with the currency note validator.

10. The system according to claim 9, wherein the identification adapter is in communication with the currency note validator via a wireless link or a connector.

11. The system according to claim 8, wherein the integral storage memory stores information from the microcontroller.

12. The system according to claim 11, wherein the storage mechanism comprises a removable storage cassette to hold currency notes.

13. The system according to claim 8, wherein the currency note validator is in communication with the integral storage memory.

14. The system according to claim 13, wherein the currency note validator is in communication with the integral storage memory via a wireless link or via a connector.

15. The system according to claim 8, wherein the soft count supervisor comprises a portable unit.

16. The system according to claim 8, wherein the soft count supervisor comprises a hand held unit.

17. The system according to claim 8, wherein the system is configured such that at least the currency note validator is in communication with the identification adapter, the storage mechanism is in communication with the currency note validator, and the soft count supervisor is in communication with the storage mechanism.

Sub, a27 18. A method for tracking the operation of a currency validation system comprising the steps of:
storing a unique serial number in an identification adapter;
communicating the unique serial number to a currency validator having a microcontroller;
communicating performance information from the currency validator to a nonvolatile memory within a storage mechanism; and
communicating the performance information from the nonvolatile memory to a soft count supervisor, the soft count supervisor including a computer and a program for producing spread sheet data.

19. The method of claim 18, wherein the storage mechanism comprises a removable storage cassette, and the step of communicating the performance information from the nonvolatile memory to the soft count supervisor includes the substeps of:
coupling the soft count supervisor to the storage cassette; and
initiating a data transfer sequence to allow communication between the soft count supervisor and the nonvolatile memory within the storage cassette.

20. The method of claim 19, wherein the currency validator comprises a note validator for collecting bills, and the step of communicating performance information from the currency validator to the nonvolatile memory includes the substeps of:

recording a bill count parameter corresponding to the number of bills examined by the validator;

storing time stamp information corresponding to a period of time when the number of bills were examined;

storing a time service parameter corresponding to the length of time the validator is in use; and

transmitting the bill count parameter, the time stamp information, and the time service parameter to the nonvolatile memory.

21. The method of claim 20, wherein the identification adapter is coupled to the currency validator via a connector or a wireless link and the step of communicating to the currency validator includes the substep of:

transferring the unique serial number via the connector or the wireless link.

22. The method of claim 21, wherein the currency validator is coupled to the storage mechanism via a wireless link or a connector and the step of communicating to the storage mechanism includes the substep of:

transferring the performance information via the wireless link or the connector.

23. The method of claim 18, further comprising the step of:

outputting spread sheet accounting data, the spread sheet accounting data including the unique serial number and the performance information.